

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUCAR 03481 231219Z
ACTION INR-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 /023 W
-----087113 231718Z /72

R 230846Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
TO AMEMBASSY WARSAW
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9678

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUCHAREST 3481

EO. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR, RO
SUBJECT: NEW ROMANIAN AMBASSADOR TO POLAND

1. RCP DAILY "SCINTEIA" ANNOUNCED MAY 18 THAT FORMER MINISTER OF TOURISM ION COSMA HAS BEEN NAMED AMBASSADOR TO POLAND, REPLACING AUREL DUCA. COSMA, ONE OF THE LAST GHEORGHIU-DEJ PROTEGES TO HAVE BEEN HELD OVER IN THE CEAUSESCU REGIME, HAD BEEN IN LIMBO SINCE BEING REPLACED AT THE TOURISM MINISTRY IN THE MARCH 1978 GOVERNMENT SHAKE-UP.

2. COSMA (SOMETIMES SPELLED "COZMA") HAS HAD AN UNDISTINGUISHED IF VARIED CAREER OF THE ROMANIAN POLITICAL ROLLER-COASTER. RUMORED TO HAVE BEEN A SECURITATE (SECURITY POLICE) OFFICIAL IN HIS EARLY CAREER, HE SERVED AS MINISTER OF RAILWAYS IN 1956-57, AND AS MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY FROM 1957 TO 1961. IN 1962 HE MOVED TO THE KEY POST OF PRESIDENT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE BUCHAREST PEOPLE'S COUNCIL (EQUIVALENT TO MAYOR), BUT WAS DEMOTED TO VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL IN 1968 AS CEAUSESCU EASED HIS PREDECESSOR'S APPOINTEES OUT OF MORE IMPORTANT SLOTS. IN DECEMBER 1970 COSMA WAS SHIFTED TO THE NEWLY CREATED BUT LOW-RANKING MINISTRY OF TOURISM. COSMA HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF THE RCP CENTRAL COMMITTEE SINCE 1955, AND WAS A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE DURING THIS TIME WITH THE BUCHAREST PEOPLE'S COUNCIL.

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3. AS MINISTER OF TOURISM, COSMA WAS KNOWN TO COMPLAIN THAT TOURISM HAD NO PRIORITY WITHIN THE GOR. THE DILEMMA OF HIS ASSIGNMENT WAS TO INCREASE WESTERN (I.E. HARD CURRENCY) TOURISM IN A STATE WHICH GENERALLY LACKS MODERN TOURIST FACILITIES, IS RELUCTANT TO EXPEND DEVELOPMENT FUNDS ON TOURISM, AND IS TEMPTED TO REGARD TOURISM AS A SECURITY THREAT AGAINST WHICH THE ROMANIAN POPULATION MUST

BE QUARANTINED. STAGE WAS SET FOR COSMA'S DISMISSAL BY POOR 1977 TOURIST FIGURES CAUSED BY EARTHQUAKE AND BY MIS-MANAGEMENT AND UNRELIABILITY OF TOURIST SERVICES, WHICH LED TO CANCELLATIONS OF BOOKINGS BY WEST GERMAN AGENCIES. COSMA WAS RUMORED TO BE PARTICULARLY UNDER A CLOUD AFTER ANGRY ROMANIAN TOURISTS AT BLACK SEA RESORT OF NEPTUNE WERE EVICTED FROM HOTEL ROOMS LAST SUMMER TO MAKE WAY FOR LARGE OFFICIAL PARTY ACCOMPANYING CEAUSESCU AND FOR HARD CURRENCY-PAYING WESTERN TOURISTS. DISPLACED ROMANIANS REPORTEDLY DEMONSTRATED OUTSIDE CEAUSESCU VILLA AT NEPTUNE, AND DISMISSAL OF RESPONSIBLE MINISTER WOULD HAVE BEEN CLASSIC CEAUSESCU RESPONSES.

4. COSMA IS APPARENTLY IN HIS EARLY 60'S, AND REPORTEDLY SUFFERED A MILD HEART ATTACK IN 1971. AMBASSADORSHIP IN WARSAW REPRESENTS HIS RETIREMENT FROM DOMESTIC SCENE. TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, COSMA HAS NO PREVIOUS FOREIGN AFFAIRS EXPERIENCE, AND FROM HIS BACKGROUND WE DO NOT INFER ANY LIKELY TRENDS IN POLISH-ROMANIAN RELATIONS; HIS APPOINTMENT, RATHER, ILLUSTRATES GOR LABOR-RELATIONS PRINCIPLE WITH SENIOR CADRES THAT ECLIPSE SELDOM MEANS UNEMPLOYMENT. AGGREY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AMBASSADOR DESIGNATE, BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BUCHAR03481
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780216-1099
Format: TEL
From: BUCHAREST
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780531/aaaaazmk.tel
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Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION INR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2609603
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEW ROMANIAN AMBASSADOR TO POLAND
TAGS: PINR, RO, PL, (COSMA, ION)
To: WARSAW
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7aa10799-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014